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### EDITORIAL.

#### REPLY TO PROF. PHELPS' ARTICLE ON ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION IN NORMAL SCHOOLS.

We cheerfully accord space to the article of Prof. PHELPS on "Academic Instruction in Normal Schools," and thus give further evidence of our favorable "disposition" towards Normal Schools. We almost shrink from saying very much more on the subject, since the Professor seems to be able to detect in us a jesuitical habit of saying what we do not mean, or meaning what we do not say. He can "heartily subscribe to the language" of our creed, but —.

After all, we conceive there is but one point of disagreement between us. We both are laboring for the same object, the elevation of the people by means of the public schools. We both believe in obtaining the best teachers possible. We both believe in thorough academic training, in the "three R's." We both believe in having this elementary instruction given in the Normal School, if necessary. Here we separate. Prof. Phelps believes in calling this work "Normal instruction," *if it is done in the Normal School.* We do not. We call it academic or elementary instruction, no matter by whom or where given.

Let us put in juxtaposition a few sentences from Prof. PHELPS' last article, using his own italics.

"In my former article, I alluded to the notorious fact of the great deficiency in academic knowledge on the part of most of those who enter the Normal Schools. It is idle to say that such should be rejected; for that is to say that nearly *all* should be rejected, and the rooms should be tenantless." Now add this:

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"Too many of our educators, I fear, are crazy to build up higher institutions, to the neglect and even at the expense of the thorough common education of the common people."

That is just what we complain of. There are men who will persist in doing elementary work and calling it Normal work; who teach the "three R's" and nurse themselves and their pupils into the belief that they are training teachers. We know of a "College," a considerable portion of whose work consists in teaching the alphabet. We presume the "faculty" of this degree-bestowing institution receives pupils of this infantile stage of progress for the same reason that the Normal Schools admit their hosts of fledglings, in order that "The rooms should" not "be tenantless."

Prof. PHELPS complains of the superficial work done in the common schools. With him we lament this fact. We wish, for the credit of Normal graduates as well as for the sake of the community, that less of it might be charged upon the Normal Schools. And it is very poor consolation, when reflecting upon the subject, to be told that there are no "more charlatans among Normal graduates in proportion to their numbers, than among the matriculants of colleges, universities, or even of professional schools generally." As if it would be a relief for me, while groaning over the treatment that my child's mind is receiving at the hands of a quack teacher to know that there is another quack ready to care for his body, and still another anxious to look after his soul!

Prof. PHELPS complains of "hasty generalization on the basis of a few facts of a possibly doubtful authenticity." To which we reply that our facts are not few, neither are they of doubtful authenticity, neither is our generalization hasty. One of our generalizations is this, that the best teachers, as a class, of whom we have any knowledge are

Normal graduates. This conclusion is based upon years of close observation in the school room. Another generalization is, that while the graduates of some Normal Schools are almost invariably good teachers, and enter upon their work in the humility of true scholars, the graduates of other Normal Schools are just as uniformly poor teachers, whose ignorance is equalled only by their conceit. We do not conclude that every poor teacher is a Normal graduate, nor that every Normal graduate is a poor teacher. But we do cry out against the Normal Schools that confer degrees upon persons who have neither the natural ability nor the scholarship necessary for the positions for which their diplomas certify their fitness.

We desire to be distinctly understood that we have no reference to Prof. PHELPS in these remarks. His record is unsullied; none stands higher than he. And we think that his sensitiveness to criticism is largely owing to his consciousness of duty faithfully and successfully performed. Prof. PHELPS will observe that we have made no sweeping assertions against Normal Schools, professors, or graduates, but have invariably accorded the highest credit to Normal graduates as the best teachers, as a class.

Another remark to which we call the Professor's attention is this: that as he judges of the character of the instruction given in the common school by the scholarship of the applicants for the Normal, (not a very good basis for his sweeping condemnation of that instruction,) so we, superintendents and principals, judge of the character of Normal work by the actual teaching of the graduates. He must allow us therefore, to believe the evidence of our own senses.

We can conceive of greater calamities to the nation than the rendering "tenantless" of the Normal School rooms, which Prof. PHELPS thinks would be the result of the rejection of those unfitted to enter. When the demand for an article exceeds the supply, the price of the article is usually enhanced. If there were not so many poor teachers, the good teachers might receive better pay. If ignorant applicants were rejected, educated men and women might be encouraged to apply. And we hope yet to see the day when a college diploma or its equivalent shall be demanded by the state from every applicant for admission to every Normal School.

The more carefully we peruse Prof. PHELPS' article, the more thoroughly we are convinced that there is but little difference in our beliefs. For instance, he says: "The teaching of Pedagogics without a previous mastery of the three R's, and much more general information, will be of no avail." Those are our sentiments; and we complain that so many so-called Normal graduates *have not been taught the three R's*, and therefore, by the Professors own showing, can know nothing of Pedagogics.

We have written more than we had intended. We leave the field to Prof. PHELPS, assuring him once more of our firm support of the Normal School System, and of our unconquerable hostility to shams under every guise, especially to the educational lion who is, with the exception of his (sheep) skin, an ass.

THIS is the time to aid in extending the circulation of the JOURNAL. Our club rates and our premium offer are liberal and should induce many to subscribe.

#### LANGUAGE LESSONS CONTINUED.

**NUMBER.**—To develop the idea of number, we resort to our previously mentioned device, of sending a pupil from the room, to whom the remaining pupils write sentences describing actions. First, let an act be performed by a single person; second, by two or more. Suppose these sentences should occur among the number which the pupils produce: "The boy reads." "The boys read." The pupil who has been sent out, may be led to point out the part of the sentence which helped him to know that more than one read the second time. He may write the sentences so that the second will be under the first, word by word; then the comparison will lead him to observe the *s* in the plural form. Many sentences should be formed before anything new is taken up. The reading books, newspapers, and magazines may be examined, and a list of nouns, singular and plural, may be made. The conversation of every one may be subjected to notice for a few days, and notes may be made of the plural and singular nouns used. From an examination of this list it will be found that, *most nouns form their plural by adding s to the singular.*

In this list will also be found such forms as boxes, foxes, churches, bushes. These, when arranged in a list and carefully examined, will suggest the second rule: *Nouns ending in s, sh, ch, x or z, form their plural by adding es to the singular.* Such words as party, lady, etc., may suggest an additional rule. Many words which do not conform to these rules may well be taught by rote. From this class we select the following: Man, woman, child, tooth, foot, half, calf, wharf, knife, wife, sheep, roof, day, posey, muff, money, (moneys), penny, chief, valley, etc. It will be observed that the rules and definitions given embody the *experience* of the pupil.

Lists of nouns in the singular may be given and the plural form required; this exercise may be varied by giving plurals and requiring the singular. The teacher may use the list as a spelling lesson, pronouncing the singular, the pupil spelling the plural. Teach this, that, these, those, by rote. Write such sentences as this: That man's son goes to this church, and let the pupil change to the plural, as follows: Those men's sons go to these churches. Repeat the exercises in sentence making before suggested.

Sentences can now consist of a greater variety and may be more complicated, *e.g.*, —went to the —, and bought a nice little — for her two kind —. One small — saw her — coming across the level —, where a herd of —, and a flock of — were feeding; near by was a drove of —, and a hunter with his two pointer —, looking for a covey of —, and a bevy of —. These sentences must, of course, be made concerning familiar things; what would be suitable for a country school, would be unsuitable for one in the city.

It is next to impossible to give too many exercises in sentence making. The best part of language lessons consists in this.

**GENDER.**—Write sentences as before: "The child wrote a sentence," "The pupil read a verse." Give these sentences to the pupil who has been sent from the room.

**Teacher.**—Mary, Read the sentences and answer this

question: "Does the child who wrote a sentence sit upon the girl's side of the house or upon the boy's side?"

*Mary*.—I can not tell.

*Teacher*.—Where does the pupil who read the verse sit?

*Mary*.—I can not tell.

*Teacher*.—Try again. The sentences now read as follows: John wrote, and, The girl read a verse. Which word helps you to know upon which side of the house the reader sits?

*Mary*.—Girl.

*Teacher*.—What name do you give to the children sitting on the other side of the house?

*Mary*.—Boys.

Show that in many other cases another word or a different form is used to distinguish males from females, *e.g.*, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, husband, wife, man, woman, John, Jane, Charles, Caroline, Henry, Henrietta, heir, heiress, cock, hen, bull, cow, gander, goose, etc. Show that the names of inanimate objects present no such distinctions. Teach that he, his, and him denote males, she, and her denote females, and it and its denotes *neither* male nor female. Fill blanks as follows: The — and his — went to the —. The sailor spoke kindly to the — and told — a long —. The — found her —. The — is visiting his —. Has that — learned her lesson well? Write upon the blackboard list of nouns. In the attempt to classify these by writing words of the same kind in columns, it will be found that there are four kinds of words, in four different columns. Names of Males, names of Females, names of Neither, names of Either. After *repeated* exercises in classifying nouns with respect to gender, and exercises in making sentences containing the names of males, females, etc., the following definitions may be made by the children:

**DEFINITIONS.**—The Masculine gender denotes males.

The Feminine gender denotes females.

The Common gender denotes either male or female.

The Neuter gender denotes neither males nor females.

The teacher must define, gender, masculine, etc., so that the use of the technical terms may be familiar before the pupils attempt to frame a definition.

A fine exercise in sentence making is the following: The teacher performs a series of actions and requires a careful description of them, *e.g.*,—the teacher rises, steps two steps to the desk, takes a book with the left hand, looks at it, finds it is wrong side up, inverts it, opens it, turns three leaves with the right hand, reads a sentence, closes it and places it on the desk. By the use of skill, sentences reviewing all the past work may be brought out, and habits of close observation and careful description may be engendered.



THE attempt by a principal to secure uniformity of method in teaching, frequently injures rather than benefits. It is not true of teaching many subjects, that there is but one right way. Neither can every teacher secure the best results by the same methods. Give your teachers perfect freedom to manifest their individuality, as long as they are not in error. Show them your methods, criticize theirs, but allow them liberty to choose that tool best adapted to their strength. We cannot all wield a sledge.

#### EVENING SCHOOLS OF CHICAGO.

Chicago, like other large cities, has made provision in her evening schools for the education of her working classes. Here may come any and all who are debarred the privileges of the day schools. No limitation is made in regard to sex, color, occupation, condition or age, except that the pupil must be at least twelve years old, and must not be a member of a public day school. The Chicago evening schools have usually been opened shortly after the first of September, and have been closed at the Christmas holidays. Several attempts to continue them after the holidays have not been successful, the number of pupils returning in January not being sufficient to warrant the expense. By a late action of the Board of Education they are to be opened simultaneously with the day schools, and continued till ordered closed.

The evening schools are held in the public school buildings; not in all of them, but in as many as seem to be needed.

Come, reader, let us visit one. Do not be alarmed by the reports which you have heard of disorderly mobs, of flying ink stands and fleeing policemen, of broken chairs and cracked skulls. Such stories are gross exaggerations; and while it is true that disturbances did occur a few years ago in one of the schools, they were not serious.

The principals of the evening schools are now, all of them, principals of the day schools, and we are told that it is a matter of history that while no other person has ever succeeded, no principal of a grammar school in Chicago has ever failed in securing immediate and absolute control of an evening school. Let us witness one at his evening work.

We enter the building shortly after seven o'clock. The vestibule and lower hall are crowded, and many wait outside, preferring the fresh air to the close atmosphere within. Seated at a small table in the passage way, in order to prevent the noise which such a crowd would necessarily make in ascending to the office above, the principal examines the applicants as they are passed to him in line by the janitor. Varied as the throng is in age and general appearance, it is tranquil, and the quick, quiet questions of the examiner are heard distinctly by all. Long experience gives rapidity and ease in this as in other occupations. A few interrogatories attacking salient points reveal the progress in study made by the pupil, and in a fraction of the time required to write this account of it, a ticket containing a list of necessary books is taken from one of half-a-dozen small packages, and given to the tyro, with the direction to "buy and return." Another and another is disposed of, with more or less rapidity, according to the applicant's ability to understand the queries. Some can talk German only, when the necessary inquiries are frequently made in that language, not, however, with the elegance of a cultured native. Some talk only Bohemian, Polish, or Norwegian, and usually bring interpreters with them. If not, their inability to speak English seems to be sufficient to decide what is to be done with them and by them. For some time, perhaps for an hour, no impression seems to be made on the numbers present, the places of those sent to purchase books being taken by new comers, and many returning with the necessary books and implements. These latter

are immediately sent to the rooms assigned them. Let us go to some of these rooms, leaving the man in the hall to wrestle with his responsibilities.

The first thing noticed by visitors is the *quiet*, which is a source of admiration to all, even to the teachers of day schools. The discipline is usually perfect, the ticking of the clock being heard in the intervals of recitation. No corporal punishment is ever attempted. It is assumed that every pupil has come with the intention of studying, and an interruption by any of the many tricks prevalent in day schools, is deemed an impertinence which subjects the offender to instant dismissal, if the principal deems the matter sufficiently serious. With teachers of ordinary judgment one or two dismissals are sufficient for a school for the entire term. If there are any others disposed to create a disturbance, they are wise enough to restrain their propensities for mischief, or absent themselves wholly.

The nationality impresses one at once as largely foreign. The reports show American and foreign births about equal (in 1874, 1,374 Americans to 1,320 foreigners), but many of the former are of foreign parentage. It is almost incredible, yet nevertheless true, that there are in some of our evening schools natives, not only of America, but of Chicago, twelve to twenty years of age, who can not speak English, much less read it. The cosmopolitan character of Chicago is well illustrated here. Not only are nearly all sections of the union represented, but nearly all parts of the globe. Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Bohemia, Poland, Russia, Austria, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Switzerland, South America, Africa, Asia. For the Chinaman is one of the most regular attendants, and is most assiduous in his attempts to read across the page.

The business callings are as varied as the nationalities. Among workers in wood are carpenters, carvers, cabinet-makers, turners, lathers, wagon-makers, etc.; among workers in metals are blacksmiths, machinists, boiler-makers, gunsmiths, silversmiths, plumbers, tanners, wire-workers, etc. There are tailors, bakers, shoemakers, painters, cigar-makers, butchers, grocers, clerks, cash-boys, printers, peddlers. The girls are mostly dress-makers, milliners, or "at home;" but some are bookbinders, silver gilders, or "*stripers*." The business of "stripping" is not as bad as it might be thought: it consists of stripping the leaf tobacco from the stem. And it is an indication of the division of labor in a large city that the occupation of a pupil is so frequently given as a particular part of a trade, as "*finishing*," "*polishing*," etc.

The ages of the pupils vary from twelve to nearly three score years. The majority are youths just reaching into manhood, though middle aged men are quite common. This is particularly true of the German and Scandinavian classes, which consist almost exclusively of foreigners of those nationalities, who attend simply to learn the language. Here may be found the boy and his father, each with a First Reader in hand, eagerly imitating the pronunciation of the teacher, or endeavoring to understand the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Patient and painstaking, these foreigners usually make good progress. Their attendance is far the best, and trouble in discipline is unknown. They "*mean business*," and if the teacher has the faculty of adapting himself to their needs, their regularity of attendance, persistence and progress are

admirable. After one or two terms with a good teacher, they are frequently transferred to English speaking rooms, though the older men find difficulty in mastering the language containing so many strange sounds. In one of these rooms is a gentleman (he *is* a gentleman) of fifty-three years, who is now in his third term, and whose prospects are good for three more.

In the evening schools more than perhaps anywhere else, the teacher makes the school. The attendance of the pupil is voluntary, so that unless the teacher is able to impart instruction in an interesting manner, the pupil finds that coming "*doesn't pay*." After a hard day's work an effort is required to be at school by 7:30, especially when work does not cease till six o'clock. In an hour and a half are to be crowded the journey home, toilette, supper, and journey to school. Pupils have been known to take supper in the school yard, the meal having been brought by a younger brother, as there was no time for the journey home.

School closes at 9:30; home may not be reached till 10 o'clock, and the demands of work require early rising. Frequently "*the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*," as may be seen by the heads drooping on the desks as 9 o'clock approaches. The weather has its effect. Storms decrease, but fine weather does not necessarily increase, attendance. The balmy evenings of Indian summer are too enjoyable without to be spent in a school-room. Election day is *dies nefastus*: the welfare of the country being too near the heart of the average pupil to permit him to attend to his private affairs on that evening.

#### THE GOING OUT NUISANCE.

Please sir, may I go out? We have heard this question asked. A dim memory of teachers puzzled with the character of answer proper to be given in such cases, is packed away in the store house of our experience.

Parents hold it a vested right, that this request should always be granted. The advantage is seen, and the *hippopotami* of society who conceive that an advantage gained by them against good order is a vindication of their rights to claim a place among the higher orders of the mammalia, are always ready to break down any rule or order. It shows that they are superior to something, and that they have made themselves felt.

We have controlled the abuse of this privilege by placing a blank book upon the table and requiring each pupil who goes out to register the time of his departure and that of his return. The intervening time was made up after school.

#### NOISY TEACHERS.

The still small voice was the vehicle of spiritual power in that sublime meeting of the Eternal with the prophet of old. The expression of emotion may be accompanied with noise; judgment never. Systematic, quiet, effective work in school, is the mark of a good teacher. We know teachers who by the force of the earnestness of their labor overcome their want of system and method. Genius shows itself in the school room as well as in the forum, and here, as there, works beyond, above, and without

rules. Extremely earnest people of an excitable disposition burn out their supply of vital force and are left as flickering tapers, half way through life giving out fitful gleams of light which by their uncertain burning render the darkness more profound. Strong will-power, coupled with intelligence and careful preparation, gives a teacher, who will work steadily and with a clearly defined purpose. Noise indicates weakness in the direction where true strength should lie. The teacher who is conscious of that reserve force which thorough preparation gives, does not bluster in the endeavor to do good work.

Conscious weakness always betrays itself by labored effort to conceal effort. Ignorance is a virtue when compared with that "ne'er do wiel" disposition which trusts to the inspiration of the hour. How many have we met whose divinity like Baal of old, was on a journey or asleep. The loud cry and bluster is a vain attempt to call him back. It substitutes the disintegration of muscular fibre, in the place of the loss of nervous tissue.

Vivacity is one thing, and working under too high pressure is another.

Genius is denied to ordinary mortals, its place must be supplied by judgment. Judgment works according to rule; not blindly, but because the rule is the result of that logical state of the mind which we call judicious.

#### CHICAGO PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION.

REGULAR MEETING, Nov. 6, 1875.

After some remarks by Superintendent PICKARD in regard to topics purely local in interest, Assistant Superintendent DOTY urged upon every member of the profession present the desirableness of pursuing some subject of study outside of professional studies.

Mr. PICKARD announced that several requests had been made to him for specimens of our work in penmanship, etc., and asked for the material with which to comply. He also announced that the work for the Centennial of next year would be done on some day between the first and fifteenth of February next; that the rules governing the exercise would be those adopted by himself for the Vienna exposition papers, by which no intimation would be given beforehand of the character of the questions, except that they would cover not only the present grade of the pupil, but all preceding grades. Mr. PICKARD regarded this adoption by the National Committee of the Chicago plan, a vindication of the honest work of three years ago.

Mr. PICKARD stated that State Superintendent ETTER desired the Association to be represented in an educational convention to meet November 19th, in Chicago, to arrange for the Centennial work in Illinois. The following were appointed that committee: Messrs. DELANO, HOWLAND, LEWIS, Mrs. FARNHAM and Miss CURTIS.

Mr. BLACKMAN desired fifteen minutes to be given every day to music.

The question, "Is the graded system of instruction adapted to the education of the masses?" was then discussed, nearly every gentleman present taking part.

When the hour for adjournment arrived, Mr. DOTY moved that the discussion be continued at the next meeting, with special reference to the merits and demerits of our own system. The motion was carried, and the meeting adjourned.

#### HOW TO QUESTION A CLASS.

In graded schools the classes are very large, and instruction of the class must necessarily take the place of the individual. The attention of the individual can always be held, and each pupil can be made to feel that the answer to every question may be required at his hand. To accomplish this, the teacher should generally address his questions to the class, then designate the particular person from whom he expects an answer. We lately noticed a teacher who failed apparently because she neglected this precaution. She would say, "John, why is the Arctic circle  $23\frac{1}{2}$  degrees from the pole?" John paid dutiful attention, but the remaining forty-five had no stock in the business. When it transpired that John was unable to answer, the teacher was compelled to repeat the question. Had she put the question thus, "Why is the Arctic circle  $23\frac{1}{2}$  degrees from the pole, John?" her recitation would have been a success instead of a failure.

THE Superintendent of the Brooklyn schools complains that he found only two persons able to solve the following problem: "Given one side and the diagonal connecting two opposite angles to find the area in acres. The length of the given side is 1,827 rods, and the diagonal is 2,765 rods." We don't believe he found any, for the mathematician is not yet born who can find the area of a triangle when two sides only are given. Is not the worthy Superintendent illustrating what he himself, but a few lines further on in his report, describes as "a fault almost fatal to efficiency in a teacher," "*want of exactness in statement*"?

#### CONTRIBUTIONS.

##### ACADEMIC WORK IN NORMAL SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE WESTERN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION:—I am gratified to observe by an editorial in your October number, that you have advanced so far in the discussion of the Normal School question, as to be able, in a few concise propositions, to lay down your creed upon that important subject. After enunciating these propositions, you proceed to remark:

It seems to us that Prof. PHELPS can subscribe heartily to that creed. It seems to us that there is nothing in it that the enemies of Normal Schools can possibly torture into hostility to a properly conducted Normal School. It seems to us that we are arguing for a higher standard of teaching and of teachers. It does not seem to us that we are disposed to render its (the Normal School's) rooms tenantless and condemn the country schools, and the graded schools of the larger towns to a hopeless, helpless mediocrity.

Before attempting to consider, briefly, the creed above referred to, please permit me to remark that I have italicised the word "disposed" in the above extract, in order to enable me to say that in my former article, I expressly conceded the honesty and good intentions of the Editors of the JOURNAL. It was my aim to avoid the use of language which should imply a disposition on their part to injure the Normal School cause. I believed then as I believe now, that theoretically, the JOURNAL is friendly to the cause, while the practical tendency of its utterances of late has been to injure and embarrass it, especially, in

*those communities where these schools are struggling for an assured existence and adequate support.* You do not need to be reminded, surely, that in such a conflict, encouraging words from *educational organs* are helpful, and discouraging ones are harmful, or, if criticisms of alleged defects are in order, common justice demands that they should be accompanied by suggestions of remedies that are specific and practicable; otherwise, their effect is injurious and embarrassing. Criticism, unless discriminating and just, is a dangerous power. So is hasty generalization on the basis of a few facts of a possibly doubtful authenticity. In my previous communication, I endeavored to make the point which I now reiterate without fear of successful contradiction, to wit: *that our Normal Schools, as a class, are doing as good work in their proper spheres as the schools below them and public sentiment will permit, and that within their spheres they are at least equal to any other institutions that we possess.*

This is not to assert that they are perfect, nor even to claim that they do not need, and are not susceptible of, improvement. But in their behalf it may be repeated that they are young. Their increase has been rapid. In many instances persons have necessarily been placed in charge of them without the special training and experience essential to their proper organization and management. The right men and women have not, in all cases, been at hand for such places. Are we told then that they have made and are still making mistakes? Well, what then? Why, it is human to err! And are there any more charlatans among Normal Graduates, in proportion to their numbers, than among the matriculants of colleges, universities, or even of professional schools generally?

The Hon. GEO. S. BOUTWELL, when Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, made a thorough official investigation of the question of the relative value and success of Normal School Graduates, as teachers in the schools of the good old Bay State. He sought by actual correspondence with school officers throughout the State to obtain their judgments of the question, as disinterested witnesses. The result is embodied in one of his latter reports, the date of which, I am not now able to name. But that result was decidedly and emphatically in favor of those who had received the Normal School training. Mr. BOUTWELL sums up the results in propositions as concise and emphatic as are the excellent articles in the JOURNAL's Normal School creed heretofore alluded to. And, permit me to say, that while in charge of the State Normal School at Trenton, New Jersey, nearly fifteen years ago, I made a similar investigation with the same results. Here then, are two Eastern States that have made an official examination, after a practical test of many years, into the relative value of trained and untrained teachers. The result is a balance in favor of the former, *as a class*, of course. The tests and investigations were made when the Normal Schools were still weak, comparatively, in experience and resources. It would be a violent assumption to declare that these institutions, with fifteen years of added experience and with steadily increasing resources, are not doing far better work now than then.

Again, take the State of New York. She started out with one Normal School as "an experiment for five years," in 1844, on an annual appropriation of \$10,000. What do we see there in 1875? Eight Teachers' Semi-

naries supported by the State at an annual expense of \$144,000, besides other generous appropriations for repairs of buildings, libraries, apparatus and other material aids to their development. Then look at the city of New York with a female Normal College of nearly, or quite, one thousand pupils and occupying a building that cost, if I mistake not, a million dollars. When the State Normal School at Albany was organized, it was the fourth, then in existence, on this continent. Within thirty one years the number supported at public expense has increased to nearly one hundred. Now every northern State, except Ohio and Iowa, supports one or more of these institutions. Do not these facts seem to indicate that, as a class, they are reasonably successful, and that, as a class, their graduates compare favorably, at least, with their co-laborers, even though the Superintendent of the Brooklyn schools found one who did not give a satisfactory definition of a passive verb?

But now for a few words respecting your *creed*. I am glad to say that I can, in the main, heartily subscribe to the *language* of the several articles. In the third, you assert your belief that Normal Schools should be "strictly professional." While I assent to this, we should yet probably disagree as to what constitutes "strictly professional" instruction. According to my creed, that teaching is "strictly professional" which is necessary, and which is done with a supremely professional object. It is necessary that teachers should thoroughly understand that which they are to teach. That profound statesman and philosopher, Mr. Guizot, once declared that "A good schoolmaster must know much more than he is called upon to teach, in order that he may teach with intelligence and taste." These are golden words, and I pray that the time may speedily come when they shall constitute the shibboleth of American educators. I will go farther than the renowned French statesman, and affirm my strong conviction that *it is necessary for the teacher to understand the subjects he teaches far better, more widely and deeply, than they are usually taught, even in the best schools for general education, and far better than is needful for persons in the other walks of life.* The teacher should know the *why* and the *wherefore* of that which he is to teach. He should master each branch in its relations to other branches. He should study many subjects not so necessary to other persons, and rarely or never taught in other schools. Hence, what theorizers are pleased to call "academic instruction," is necessary, in the Normal Schools. And instruction given in the spirit and for the purposes above indicated, is "Normal instruction." To teach reading, arithmetic, grammar, geography and other studies in this *rigorous and comprehensive way, and as one means of teaching how to teach them*, is just as legitimate, just as necessary, and just as "strictly professional," so far as it goes, as to teach Rosenkranz's Pedagogics, Page's Theory and Practice, or Ogden's Science of Education and Art of Teaching! Nay, it is more professional, and more *effectual* than the attempt merely to tell the pupil-teacher how to do it, without actually going through the steps, yourself, and illustrating your precepts by the impressive lessons of your own example, as a "Normal" teacher.

The best, and, indeed, the only effectual way to teach the art of communicating ones knowledge upon any subject, is by the study, rigorous, persistent *drill and practice*

*in the class room, as a student.* How few of our public schools make the clear, concise and forcible expression of ideas, the constant test of the pupil's attainments in the several branches, at every step! And yet this is the only really decisive test of such attainments, while the *art of using language freely, and to the point*, is one of the prime qualifications of the teacher. Normal Schools must impart this power. *It can only be done by teaching the BRANCHES and exacting a full and faithful account of them at the hands of the pupil-teacher, subject to the constant drill and criticism of the accomplished instructor.*

In my former article, I alluded to the notorious fact of the great deficiency in academic knowledge on the part of most of those who enter the Normal Schools. It is idle to say that such should be rejected; for that is to say that nearly *all* should be rejected, and the rooms should be tenantless. And yet, those who enter these schools are no more deficient than the average of persons of their ages and circumstances. Edward Everett once stated in an address at the dedication of the State Normal School at Bridgewater, that an *accurate and thorough knowledge of the common branches of education was far more rare than almost any other attainments.* I cannot now quote his exact language, but this is the substance of it, and it is true. The fundamental error in American education is the loose, inaccurate and slipshod teaching of these common branches. Our children are crazy to get up into the so-called higher branches, and *too many of our educators, I fear, are crazy to build up higher institutions, to the neglect, and even at the expense of the thorough common education of the common people.* I hazard nothing in the assertion, I think, that a vast majority of our common schools fail to *impart a tinge of the discipline in teaching the common branches that they are susceptible, when properly taught, of imparting.* But how shall this tide of superficiality be stemmed? How shall this mania for high sounding names and terms be arrested? How shall knowledge, *exact and thorough*, be made to take the place of the mechanical mummeries that are so widely practiced upon our children under the name of teaching?

The answer must be found right here in the issues of this ill-advised warfare upon what is called academic teaching in the Normal Schools. The children will never be taught thoroughly, until their teachers are taught thoroughly. There is no room for methods and principles of teaching, except on the basis of exact knowledge, thorough mental and moral discipline. The teaching of Pedagogics without a previous mastery of the three R's, and much more general information, will be of no avail. Now, instead of objecting to the so-called academic teaching by the Normal Schools, let us encourage and uphold them in the effort to afford examples of *a better class of work.* Let us recognize that they have a complicated and a difficult task before them. Let us remember that they are engaged in the great work of *educational reform*; that they mean revolution and are slowly, yet surely, accomplishing their work, in spite of those faults that pertain to all things human. In the face of the palpable fact that *their growth has been more rapid than that of any other class of professional schools*, and that States that began, a few years ago, with an expenditure of ten thousands in their behalf, have increased it until it has mounted to the hundreds of thousands, it is folly to claim that they are not

successful, and that they are not meeting every reasonable and just expectation. Revolutions do not go backwards. These schools will conquer a peace; they will increase in numbers; they will improve in quality, under the guiding light of experience, until they will become co-extensive with the needs of our common schools and capable of supplying the schools of this nation with "able masters worthy of the high vocation of instructing a free people."

Most sincerely your friend,

WM. F. PHELPS.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF COUNTRY SCHOOLS.

##### GROUPING SYSTEM.

If it were asked, "Why cannot country schools be classified?" the most pertinent answer would probably be that, A classified course of study cannot be pursued when the school year is *different* in different districts, and when the attendance is so *variable*. The substance of this is sustained by facts which are incontrovertible, and from it the inference is deduced that, country schools can be classified if they will conform to the same school year, i. e., all opening on the same day, continuing the same length of time, term and term alike, during that part of the year which would secure to each school the most *uniform* attendance. Here the question arises, Can a system be devised whereby this can be accomplished? Our answer is, "consider the subject and see what may be done."

Examining statistical reports of different counties, we find certain districts—the more populous ones—invariably sustaining schools nine months each year; and the more rural ones, with few exceptions, six months. There appears to be some uniformity in this, and it suggests the idea that country schools could be arranged into groups to facilitate classification. This idea we propose to put into form by outlining a system of grouping, which we think could be put into practical operation, and which seems to be the only possible way of classifying the country schools.

The mere fact that the schools would derive greater benefit under a classified system, prompts us to suggest this method. It will, as a matter of fact, necessitate as many Courses of Instruction as there will be groups, but then, classification in some form is better than none. To secure the greatest uniformity, the most feasible way would be to arrange the schools into the fewest number of groups possible, and prepare for each group, a Course of Instruction adapted to the condition of the schools included within it.

Referring to a statement in the former part of this article, it will be observed that the fewest number of groups practicable, are two. Arranging the schools, we place all districts sustaining schools nine months into one group, and those sustaining schools but six months into another. Districts maintaining schools five, seven or eight months, should either extend or shorten their term, so as to be included in the group best adapted to their condition, and thus cut off exceptions. These groups should have some appropriate name. For our convenience we will designate the former, as Group A, and the latter, as Group B.

Having grouped the schools, the next thing in order, is to arrange a school-year for each group. In doing this,

we must take into consideration the question of securing to each school, the most uniform attendance. To accomplish this, the school-year should embrace those months, which would accommodate the majority of people sending children to school. The most proper time for the schools included in Group A, would be from the first Monday in October to the last Friday in June, and for those in Group B, from the first Monday in November to the first Friday in May. The time included within these dates, is that part of the year which cannot but insure a very regular attendance to every school.

The next subject which very properly follows, and a very important one too, is the Course of Instruction. It will be evident from the character of this system, that two courses are required,—one adapted for the schools included in Group A, and one for those included in Group B. These Courses of Instruction should be differently graded, but each should have the same object in view—the township High School. For Group A, the course should be graded in such a manner, that a pupil on satisfactorily completing it, could enter the second year grade in the High School. For Group B, in such a manner, that a pupil, when *thoroughly* completing it, would be admitted into the first year grade. The results of a Course of Instruction, graded in this way, would be highly satisfactory, and very beneficial to the High School. As it now is, the High School is prevented from entering out into its sphere. It is obliged to work in the lower grades of instruction, *preparing* pupils for High School work, instead of working in the higher grades, and being what it was designed to be, the connecting link between the common school and the college. When the district school does its preparatory work, then, and not till then can it enter into its field untrammeled. The only way to accomplish this, is to grade the district schools with special reference to the High School.

The general plan of the grouping system we have now presented. Concerning the manner in which it can be put into practical operation, and the auxiliaries requisite to ensure its successful working will form the subject of another article that will appear in a future number of the JOURNAL.

IRVING PARK, ILL.

—Thomas Edwards.

#### STRAY SHEEP.

In all dealing with people in masses, there is a law which seems to be a sort of deciding principle for cases difficult of decision. It is, that as a rule, the *greatest* good of the *greatest* number be considered. Although, doubtless, a wise rule, being the expressed wisdom of wise men, I never hear its enunciation without a queer feeling of sympathy for the poor little minority. I can never quite persuade myself that the welfare of one is *not* of as much consequence as the welfare of a greater number; —that it would not be better to labor rather to secure the lesser good of the whole. If some must walk that the "greater number" may ride in carriages, why not take the "big wagon" which will carry all—though it be not quite so easy or expeditious?

When a question like this comes up for decision in our school work, there is a sweet old legend we have all read, which I like to think of as bearing upon it,—a story of a

kind old shepherd who left—even in the wilderness—the ninety and nine wise sheep, while he sought the one which had gone astray. Surely the "greatest good of the greatest number" would have demanded that the "ninety and nine" be at least safe in the fold, before the lost sheep was sought.

In every school-room there are children like this poor little illogical sheep that could not take its bearings with the rest; children for whom the instruction given to their class-mates is entirely insufficient. Their careful teacher goes back for them again and again, bringing up many, and thinking she has brought up all; but occasionally there will be one that will escape her vigilance,—one little sheep that will be lost in the wilderness. And I have a special feeling of sympathy for children going astray in *this* wilderness, remembering my own childhood, when a lesson not understood seemed to haunt me:—filling earth, air and sky with its mystery.

Little children are very easily discouraged; in their short pilgrimage, they have not often enough met and conquered the Giant Difficulty, to feel sure that he will go down before their hand *every* time; and they are easily convinced that *this* time it is *their* turn to go down. So the child whose way is blocked by some one thing not understood, grows dull and discouraged in everything, and at last wins the title of "dummy" when, in reality, it is only a poor little sheep gone astray in the wilderness.

Every teacher has in her room children like this, the thought of whom are to her a sort of "continual skeleton in the closet"; a perpetual drawback to her pleasure in the general prosperity of her room. Lookers-on may smile approbation of her success, but she cannot quite approve of herself; she knows that there is one dark corner which her busy broom does not sweep clean; *one* little brain which is clouded with cob-webs, and daily growing only more clouded; and she does so long to bring it out into the daylight, feeling sure that she *could* do it, if she could only be quite certain that the giving to that one scholar the time and attention necessary, were the right and just thing to do.

Putting these dull children into lower classes will not help them; putting them down into lower rooms will not do it, promoting them to a higher class will sometimes do a great deal. Shakespeare says: "What's in a name?" but Shakespeare never taught school, and did not know the magical effect of "First Class" on a dull discouraged boy. I have sometimes thought I would like to make up my first class from the dull scholars who need all the encouragement they can get. But the only thing that will really bring these children out of the wilderness, is "special instruction." Their teacher knows it, and proves herself a true teacher by her longing to take hold of these poor little dullards, and make them, through the magic of her own personal influence, into bright boys and girls; never quite believing the doctrine that the time and trouble necessary are "too much for the pay"; she cannot quite persuade herself that *any* time and trouble are too much for such pay. And if she were perfectly honest, she would acknowledge that she never feels the same interest in the bright pupils, who almost teach themselves, nor the same pride in her success with them, that she does in these poor little pilgrims, who are finding the Mount of Science such very steep climbing.

I want to ask the question for myself, and for others who may have had the same puzzle come up for solution,—when we find in our rooms children who have fallen far behind—even though it be through no fault of ours—*may we not go back to seek them*, the wise principle of “the greatest good of the greatest number,” to the contrary notwithstanding? Will not some one answer the question for us? May we not find some high and pleasant pasture-land, where they may feed alone, and safely and honorably leave there our “ninety and nine” wise sheep, while we bring up to their level, the straggler, who will otherwise be, every day, more and more *surely* lost in the wilderness.

Will not our dear and honored Superintendent, whose quiet tones reach so easily the right for us in all our half questions, sometime tell us something about *this*? Will he please tell us just how *much* “special instruction” we may give, or if we may give as much as is necessary to make that which we do give, yield returns? in short, will he draw the line showing how *far* back into the wilderness it is just, and wise, and honorable for us to go in our search for “stray sheep”?

—“No. 12.”

#### METHODS OF SECURING ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY.

One of the greatest evils which meets a teacher at his entrance upon school duties, is the irregular attendance of pupils.

The pupil, who is frequently absent, falls behind his class, becomes discouraged, and as a natural consequence loses all interest in study and school. So the pupil who is habitually tardy, is forming a habit which will cling to him through life, the tardy boy making the tardy man.

A more valuable habit than that of punctuality can not be engrailed upon the life of a child. Men who are punctual are, other things being equal, the most successful in life. This is a fact which can not be disputed; it behooves us, then as teachers to use all lawful means, to secure good attendance, and punctuality in our pupils. I used the following plans in the school I taught last year:

At the end of the first month, I called together those pupils from every grade, who had been either absent or tardy. Their names were written in a book; the cause of each delinquency was carefully inquired for. If I deemed the excuse worthy, I marked the pupil excused, if not, I either wrote to the parents concerning the absence or went to see them. In this way the cooperation of the parents was secured, and the children were impressed with the importance of attending school regularly. Of the thirty cases of tardiness in the building, (enrollment four hundred and twenty-five), I found that, with two or three exceptions, all were the result of carelessness, or indifference. I talked to them earnestly upon the subject and tried to awaken a school pride. I showed them the evils resulting from tardiness, and related anecdotes, illustrating the importance of punctuality. The result was, that the next month the same pupils were not tardy again; the same thing was true with respect to absence. Each succeeding month I pursued the same plan. If a pupil was tardy through carelessness, I required him to make up ten times the time lost. I had also a picture which went

from room to room, remaining for one week in the room which the previous week had the highest per cent. of attendance, and punctuality combined. I also gave to this room some interesting oral exercise, related a story or read something pleasing from a book. As a final incentive, I gave a half holiday to those pupils who had been neither absent nor tardy during the month.

The result was, that during the last month with an enrollment of four hundred and thirty, in a manufacturing town, with children in every condition of life, there was but one case of tardiness, and ninety-seven per cent. of attendance. A child was accounted tardy unless he was within the house at the last tap of the bell.

SPRINGFIELD, O.

—Hortense G. Snyder.

#### SELECTIONS.

##### THE COUNTRY SCHOOL PROBLEM.

A paper read before the National Educational Association, at Minneapolis, Minn., August 4th, 1875, by Prof. W. F. Phelps, Principal of the State Normal School at Winona, Minn.

No careful observer of our public school system in all its parts, can fail to discover that its weakest points are to be found in its application to the rural districts. How to organize and conduct this class of schools in such a way as to secure the best results, is the most difficult problem connected with the educational movements of this country; and the subject demands a more thorough consideration than it has yet received from our educators and statesmen.

In the local organizations of the cities, we find most of the conditions essential to the highest success. They are generally supplied with convenient, well-furnished and comfortable school edifices. They are able to command the services of educated, skillful and permanent teachers. They possess libraries, apparatus and most of the other material aids to instruction. Their gradation as a general rule, is carefully adjusted to the successive stages in the evolution of the human faculties, and the principle of a division of skilled labor, suited to each of these stages is applied to the work in hand. In the department of administration there are boards of education and efficient Superintendents exercising a critical scrutiny into the minutest details and infusing into the schools all the energy and inspiration they are capable of receiving. And what is equally important is the fact, that the daily press and the popular lecture, accessible to the masses of the people, are at hand to lend their powerful aid in keeping alive that intelligent public sentiment so indispensable to the hearty support of all wise educational measures. It may be affirmed, in brief, that these great centers of material and intellectual activity are in most respects surrounded with the best known conditions of success in the promotion of universal education. While therefore, improvements in details are yet possible in the cities, the most satisfactory results may in due time be reasonably expected. Among these improvements that are possible, none is more imperatively demanded than a better method of selecting the boards of education, with special reference to a marked improvement in their average character, and in the motives and methods of their action. Men and women of culture and refinement, such alone as are worthy to sit in the chair of destiny in the American public school, will not long consent to be made the foot-balls of sordid schemers and ward politicians. That self-respect which is a leading ingredient in true manhood and womanhood, will compel them to abandon a work whose promoters, society should ever hold in the highest esteem.

But while our cities are the chief centers of population, they yet contain, in the aggregate, but a small proportion of the masses of the people. The predominant class, so far as numbers are concerned, is the industrial, and especially the agricultural class. The country neighborhoods comprise the vast majority of those who wield the ballot,

and who hold in their hands the destinies of the republic. How important, then, that to them should be secured the priceless blessings of a thorough training, a wise and generous education befitting their condition and their weighty responsibilities.

In striking contrast however, with the spectacle presented by the cities, are the conditions of the educational problem among the rural population. Only brief summary of these conditions, with a few of the more prominent evils resulting therefrom, and two or three suggestions hinting at an improvement of the situation, as a basis for subsequent discussion, is all that can be attempted within the limits of this paper:

1. The population of the rural districts is scattered over large areas of territory, rendering that close concentration and organization of means so fruitful of good in the cities, quite impossible.

2. While the township is assumed as the unit of our political system, yet in most of the States, for school purposes, it has been subdivided into numerous petty districts, by arbitrary lines, without much regard to the distribution of the inhabitants needing educational privileges. Many of these districts are so constituted as to overlap into adjoining towns, and, not unfrequently into neighboring counties, thus incurring all the evils of a divided if not conflicting jurisdiction.

3. Each petty district thus constituted, requires the election of not less than three, and in some States, of five school officers, most of whom are totally incompetent for an efficient and wise discharge of the important duties imposed upon them. Under this system, a town containing twelve school districts must elect from thirty-six to sixty officers, whose views upon the weighty educational questions with which they must deal are as crude and conflicting as are the degrees of their intelligence. The discordant elements that enter into the election of these officers, and therefore into the administration of school affairs are frequently as numerous as are the causes of individual and neighborhood broils, and they inevitably generate many bitter district quarrels that are a perpetual bane of the system.

4. It is no uncommon occurrence for two or three inhabitants of a district, dissatisfied, perhaps, with the location of a school house, the wages of a teacher, the price of a cord of wood, or other frivolous matter, to apply for a change in the district boundaries whereby they may be set off into an adjoining district, and thus relieved from some odious tax, obnoxious neighbor or other trivial objection, and the county boards make haste to grant the prayer of the petitioners.

5. Many of the districts, owing to the absurd and arbitrary manner in which they are constituted and to the frequent alterations to which they are subjected become so divided in sentiment, unsettled in policy and restricted in means, that they resort to the renting of old tenements worthless for most other purposes, or they build contracted, inconvenient, not to say uncomfortable, school houses, whose external arrangements and accommodations are such as to offend the most delicate instincts and at the same time to stimulate the most degrading passions of the human heart, while they employ the most inexperienced and incompetent teachers principally because they can be obtained at starvation prices. As a very natural result, such schools are worthless or worse than worthless; the children attend them irregularly, fall into dull, listless and destructive habits, learn to make a bad use of the few scraps of knowledge they may have acquired, and finally leave them for the scenes of active life unprepared to grapple successfully with its stern problems as men and women, and unfit for the solemn duties and great responsibilities of American citizenship.

Such is a summary review of the facts connected with the existing system for the education of the children of the rural districts constituting a vast majority of those who will soon be citizens, of this republic. A little reflection will suffice to show that under such circumstances there can be no adequate basis for an efficient organization of the schools; none for a sound and successful administration of their finances; and none for an intelligent and harmonious general management, at the

hands of so many indifferent and incompetent officers. It is plain to be seen too, that as a class such schools must be paralyzed and crippled, if not utterly destroyed, by young and inexperienced teachers, that they must yearly send forth into the community, multitudes of children and youth, undisciplined by well-directed study and self-denial, uninformed in that "knowledge which is of most worth," unprepared to grapple with the problems of daily life, and just suited to become an easy prey to crafty demagogues, or the obedient subjects of "mitred tyrants."

The public opinion of this country has not yet risen to the apprehension of the truth that a school in *reality* and a school in *name* are two very different things. Hence, in most cases, it rests content with a school in *name*, with a *form* without the *power*, a shadow without the *substance*. It has not yet begun to conceive that the question as to whether a school, or a system of schools, is a blessing or a curse, depends altogether upon its *quality* and not upon its *size*, its local *habitation* or its *name*. Mal-information is more hopeless, and, it may be added, more *harmful* than non-information, since error is ever more busy than ignorance. Hence nothing can be more certain than that an incompetent teacher inflicts upon his pupils positive and irreparable injury. He blunts the intellectual faculties, stifles the natural desire for knowledge, makes the school odious, fills the mind with distorted conceptions, corrupts the moral nature, induces carelessness, superficial and slothful habits and leaves the character of his pupils a helpless wreck, to drift about upon the sea of life, the sport of every wind that blows.

How few comparatively, among the masses of the people that are tutored in these schools, are able from just premises to reason their way to a sound conclusion upon any but the most common place and trivial subjects. How few are competent to sift and weigh testimony, to distinguish between the plausible and the truthful. How uncertain and unsatisfactory is our jury system. How dubious is justice when left to the arbitrament of the half taught twelve. What multitudes trade upon opinions taken at second hand, rather than act upon convictions that are the results of calm reflection based upon adequate evidence. How frequent are the failures in business from the simple inability clearly to discern the relations of demand and supply, to adapt means to ends, to practice the most obvious principles of finance or even to keep an accurate system of accounts. How innumerable are the accidents, how incalculable the losses that are the direct outcome of the carelessness, stupidity and error generated by poor schools and a slip-shot method of teaching. What exhaustion of soils, what a waste of materials and machinery, what holocausts of wealth, and what destruction of life and limb are the inevitable consequences of a failure to develop and rightly to direct the *brain-power* and the *heart-power* of the people, by a rational and efficient system of training through wisely administered schools, conducted by able masters worthy of their high vocation.

The influence of this bad teaching upon the management of public affairs is quite as deplorable as its effect upon individual and private interests. The average American citizen is far less qualified to act wisely in public than in private relations. Public questions are farther removed from the sphere of his thought and experience. They are, in general, more complex and demand a higher order of intelligence. The most intricate problems of political economy; questions relating to finance, tariffs, taxation, education, civil service reform, and criminal jurisprudence; questions relating to qualifications for elective offices; to foreign relations, and the issues of peace and war;—all demand an intelligent consideration on the part of those who wield the ballot, to the end that they may not ignorantly pervert it to the destruction of the great public interests involved. That a majority even of those who are returned in the census as "educated," are capable of dealing wisely with these, or, indeed with many of the minor questions that enter into the issues of an election, few will pretend to assert. And, if to this multitude, we add the millions of illiterates known to be exercising the right of suffrage, we shall have an array of ignorant ballots which no thoughtful person can

comtemple without serious concern. Ignorant, incompetent and unworthy men are thus found in nearly all branches of the public service. They are sent to our halls of legislation where they enact bad laws, and are led by corrupt demagogues to defeat measures the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

Our national military and naval academies and our State Normal schools are principally recruited from the ranks of the *better class* of those who have come from the rural districts. And yet, from the large number of rejections on the examinations for admission, which are purely elementary and quite limited in scope, we have a striking indication of the defective character of our common school teaching. Out of two classes numbering thirty-five candidates for a cadetship at West Point in the southern district of this State, only four were found to be competent and three of these had enjoyed the advantages of city schools. From the large proportion of those who fail, through lack of previous discipline and correct habits of study, to complete the courses in these institutions, we have another indication of the *weakness of the foundations*. In the necessity at present laid upon many of our Normal Schools for doing so much elementary work, we have still another evidence of poor teaching and of a fearful loss of time and resources in the rural districts. And I may appeal with confidence to the professors of our colleges and other higher institutions, asking whether their greatest embarrassments in teaching the more advanced subjects and in disciplining their students, do not grow out of the defective elementary training, the habits of inaccuracy in study and expression, and of disobedience and lawlessness in conduct, brought by the latter from the lower schools? Facts bearing upon this point are abundant and might readily be presented here but this is not necessary even did the limits of this paper permit.

Such, then, is the condition of education in the rural districts and such are a few of the facts that force themselves upon the attention of the careful observers of the working of our social and political machinery. That the defective character of our country schools, and the ignorance, inefficiency, thriftlessness and lax-morality displayed in the management both of private and public affairs, stand to each other largely in the relation of cause and effect, no person who will carefully study the subject, will we think attempt to deny. We cannot too soon, nor too vividly realize that *bad schools*, as well as *no schools* make bad men and bad citizens; that poor teachers are dear at any price, while thorough and capable ones are cheap at whatever cost. Good schools in the cities alone cannot avert the gigantic evils that flow from this condition of affairs. Cities are reinforced from the country and not the country from the cities. Nor can higher education, limited as it is to a comparatively small class, save us.

The *whole people* must not only be *tought* and *trained* but *well taught* and *thoroughly trained*, especially in those early years whose potent teachings and influences are so decisive of the destinies of the race. The days of a drudging instruction must be made as speedily as possible to pass away. The masses of our people must not merely learn to read and write indifferently well, but they must be taught to make a *good use* of reading and writing. They must be trained to comprehend clearly, to think logically, to judge rightly, and to *act wisely* and nobly.

But this great work can never be done through schools taught by ignorant, inexperienced and untrained teachers. It cannot be accomplished through agencies so wanting in all the essential elements of efficiency, both external and internal, as are a majority of our country schools. We must take a new departure. The old district system has about outlived its usefulness. However indifferently it may have served its purpose in the by-gone years, it is certainly now altogether inadequate to meet the exigencies of the present and the fast coming future time.

The new life upon which the nation is entering, the vastly increased demand for a higher order of intelligence and skill in our great industrial pursuits, upon the farm, in the workshop, in our mines and manufactures, on our railway and telegraph lines, and the overshadowing necessity for a wiser exercise of the right of suffrage

and a purer tone of official morality, all imperatively require that the schools of the people, everywhere, in city and country, should be made equal to our altered circumstances and our far greater needs. The most stupendous problem presented to American statesmanship to-day is how most effectively and certainly to educate the present and all succeeding generations up to the demands of government *of the people for the people and by the people*. And it is simply lamentable to see how far our statesmanship falls below the supreme demands of the hour. Strikes, granges, and other popular upheavals are ineffectual because too late attempts to rectify evils that should be prevented by thorough and careful training in early life.

It must not be forgotten that these elementary schools are practically the only educational resource of the great mass of the people, and that they are, at the same time, the *germs from which our institutions for higher education must spring*. As we improve and elevate them, therefore, we not only give to the masses a better education and a nobler inspiration, but we inevitably create a far greater demand for that higher culture which it is the function of the high schools, colleges, and universities to promote. The surest and best method of advancing the interests of higher education is to increase the demand for it by giving the greatest possible degree of efficiency to that which is elementary and fundamental. Give to the millions of our coming "popular sovereigns" the vitalizing seeds of true knowledge, rather than its mere husks, impart to them the *way* and the *will* to use their faculties in harmony with the laws of their evolution, through rational methods of training in the common schools, and in a few years you will create an irresistible demand for higher education that will crowd every college and university worthy of the name, in this broad land with thirsting, willing students. But while the schools for the masses are left to exist in *form or name only*, while they are loosely managed, wretchedly classified, badly taught and worse disciplined, while they tend to stifle rather than stimulate the desire for learning and the admiration of virtue, we must expect to see our country covered with weak and struggling academies and colleges, with only here and there a university that lives by anything more than a high-sounding title or a large pecuniary subsidy. As all other material arts and industries flourish and grow rich upon the basis of a successful agriculture the mother of arts, so academies, colleges and universities must live and thrive upon the broad foundation of a truly thorough and successful common school education, the mother of professions.

For one, I feel that this truth cannot be too strongly emphasized both here and everywhere. Higher institutions cannot grow and flourish, as a class, in defiance of the *law* of their growth and development. Since education itself is, and ever must be a growth, so too its institutions must be a gradual, progressive development from foundations broad and deep, if they are ever truly to succeed. From the *lower* to the higher, from the *foundation* to the superstructure and the dome, from the less to the greater, from the family, the kindergarten and the elementary school to the college and the university, is the *law* of the development of the higher institutions. But if the foundations be weak or inadequate or defective, how can the superstructure be strong. If we build upon the sand we must wearily prop and patch our superstructure until at last it falls to the ground a shapeless wreck.

Therefore it is that the more *active* aid and sympathy of the friends of higher education, and of good and true men everywhere must be more earnestly exerted in support of all measures that experience has demonstrated to be necessary for *improving the foundation*;—for the regeneration of the common schools and giving a new and higher life to the great body of the people. We must remember that ignorance and mediocrity will not of themselves seek to rise, but must be drawn up by the might of superior intelligence and wisdom.

The special agencies believed to be necessary, and most of which are already in operation in limited localities, we shall have but little time to more than mention. What is required is, that these improved means should be

everywhere applied and rendered efficient in their respective spheres.

1. The arbitrary district system so-called, should as rapidly as circumstances will permit be entirely abolished. The township should be assumed as the unit of the organization of our country schools, thus approximating the higher standard of the cities. Town boards of not more than five directors should supersede the multitudes of school officials that now exist. The school houses should become the property of the town and should be located, constructed and furnished in such a manner as best to meet the needs of the inhabitants without regard to conventional lines. The schools will thus admit of some gradation, and a definite course of study may be prescribed, whereby a central school may be established in each town for the higher instruction of the more advanced pupils. The school funds for the entire town would thus be consolidated, and would be better administered. Better teachers at better salaries would thus be employed and nepotism, and partiality in their selection would become far less frequent. The schools would thus yield results that will better satisfy the people, who in turn will be better disposed to bear whatever taxation may be necessary for their highest efficiency, as in the cities.

2. The county superintendents, township boards and the teachers who have not received a thorough professional training in the Normal Schools, should be selected on competitive examination alone, and all who do not come up to the prescribed standard of qualifications should be excluded until able to do so. This question of the requisite qualifications of teachers and school officers, is the vital point of the whole educational system, and this is the point at which to inaugurate a civil service reform that will "stick." Only begin this reform in your schools, with your boards of education, superintendents and teachers, and it will soon make its way into the different departments of the government, whether the politicians desire it or not.

3. Teachers' Institutes thoroughly organized and perfected in their details, and under competent leadership must be brought home to every teacher, not otherwise professionally instructed. Or I might with more propriety say, perhaps, that every such teacher must be brought home to the institutes, if permitted to preside over a school, for he who has lost the ambition for professional improvement has lost the power of professional usefulness, and he should speedily be placed on the retired list, without even the poor compliment of half pay. The very last place in the busy hive of this world's affairs for the incompetent or the slothful, is at the head of a school, either large or small.

4. Our Normal Schools must be perfected and increased, until they shall become co-extensive with the common school system of which they are an indispensable part, and are made capable of meeting its wants for competent teachers and school officers in every department. But lest I be suspected of a disposition to magnify my special office, let me summon a more disinterested witness to testify for me under this head. The respected president of this body, in an address delivered at Chattanooga, Tenn., on the 30th of June, last, used the following language:

"On the same grounds that the community finds it rational to establish technical schools to prepare the artisan, the directors of public education have found it necessary to establish Normal and Training Schools for the preparation of teachers. The most precious material to be wrought by the artist, is the human child. Here above all, there should be no waste in time, or means, or opportunities. But the unskilled pedagogue may squander all these, and even give a *wrong direction to the energies of a whole life*. To prevent this disaster, in the Normal School the future teacher is drilled in the methods, and appliances by which to seize and understand the problem of development of the child, and to render actual the rational faculties of the pupil, which are at first only potential, only a matter of promise. The great States of Europe, Germany, Austria, and France have *begun* their educational systems, by founding seminaries for the training of teachers. I may say without fear of contradiction

that education in the United States to-day, is receiving a greater impulse from our 120 Normal Schools than from all other sources put together. To be congratulated, therefore, is that community, which founds its Normal School as the head of its educational system, and supports it liberally as the fountain of correct methods and professional enthusiasm."

I feel prepared heartily to endorse these sentiments of Mr. Harris, and to urge them upon the public attention until they shall become a part of an abiding popular conviction. For until such a conviction shall ripen into a liberal and steadfast public policy throughout this broad land, until it shall be fully realized in practice the greater proportion of our national brain-power will remain undeveloped, and the larger part of our expenditures for education will continue to be wasted. Above all other places, we must have skilled labor in our two hundred and fifty thousand school rooms. It is for the interest, and it is the duty of a free state to afford special and extraordinary inducements for its best minds, to enter the profession of teaching. Its training schools should be perfected, and they should be filled with those who help to compose its best talent to the end, that the best brain-power, and the best skill may everywhere be employed in shaping the character and promoting the welfare and happiness of the sovereign people.

Finally, American citizens must cease to estimate the value of true education by its pecuniary cost. Said Edward Everett, "the dominion of cultivated mind is as boundless as the universe." Says President Harris, in the address already referred to: "The one educated, directive man of the community creates wealth enough to pay all the tuition in all the schools of his town or city." So every man will say, who is competent to form a righteous judgment upon the case. As defective as are our common schools, and as poor as are many of our teachers, it is my deliberate opinion that the people who employ them receive as much as they pay for. When we learn to expend more for education, and to expend it to better purpose by paying for brains, skill, moral courage, and executive ability, we shall be better satisfied, both with the investment and its proceeds. The community that confides the most precious interests of its children, to those who are willing to keep school at twenty or thirty dollars a month, cannot be accused of extravagance, either in their financial or moral ideas. What folly to invest money, however small in amount, in ignorance and incapacity, and then blindly expect that it will bring forth the fruits of intelligence and virtue in the characters of our children.

What is wealth, but natural resources developed, modified and utilized by intelligent, not ignorant, labor? Neither muscle nor machinery is capable of adding a grain, or a blade of grass to the riches of this world, except so far as it is guided and controlled by intelligence and skill. That omnipresent gas, oxygen, is no more an indispensable constituent of water, than is education of wealth. There is however this difference in the parallel that, whereas the proportion of oxygen in water is fixed and limited, and no increase of the gas can improve its quality or enhance its value, the amount of intelligence as an element in wealth cannot be restricted, and the value of the product is indefinitely increased with each new increment of brain-power. Hence, to count the cost of education in dollars and cents, is to set a price upon the true source of wealth-production itself. It is an offer to barter away that which distinguishes man from brute, civilization from barbarism. Who can compute the pecuniary value of the steam engine, the printing press, the electric telegraph, the arts of photography, of bleaching and calico-printing? For what sum, think you, would civilization be willing forever to surrender its railways, its steam vessels and its multitudinous forms of labor-saving machinery? And yet, are not all these the recent creations of the educated human brain? And do they not add each year to the wealth of the nation, a thousand fold more than all its expenditures for education? The Honorable W. H. Ruffner, Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the State of Virginia, in a recent report, estimates that the people of that State expend \$12,000,000 annually for intox-

icating beverages, and that this expenditure is greater than those for all public purposes whatsoever, education included. Extend this thought until it shall embrace the whole country, groaning under its burden of five million illiterates, that are over ten years of age! Give me the one half of that which is expended annually for rum, and within the life time of a single generation, the sun shall not shine on an ignorant untrained child, nor after that upon a besotted man within the limits of the republic. None but charlatans in political economy, will therefore object to the *cost* of education. The statesman, so-called, that uses this argument has mistaken his calling. He does not understand his business. He is hardly fitted to become a second-class financier. Much less is he qualified to be the leader of a free people to whom a high order of intelligence, is both the vital air and the genial sunshine.

The simple truth is this: Wealth is one of the products of education, and indeed it is the least valuable of those products. The better the education and the more widely it is disseminated, the greater the wealth production and distribution. Hence no investment, however liberal, that is wisely applied, is so certain to yield a geometrical ratio of increase, as that which is made for the education of a free people. No expenditures for this purpose can be extravagant, that are necessary. While there is a single ignorant child in the community, they will be necessary. Those only are extravagant that are misapplied, or that are so meagre as to place the paramount public and private interests involved, in jeopardy.

Mr. President, I have thus briefly and imperfectly endeavored to draw attention to the condition of education in the rural districts, and I submit that at this epoch in our history, no question can claim precedence over it in the arena of national discussion. It is one of those problems that we cannot afford to neglect, and I trust that we shall in the future, give to it that candid and persistent consideration which its supreme importance demands at our hands.

#### SAN FRANCISCO'S FOG AND SCHOOLS.

We make extracts from two letters in the "*Hyde Park Sun*," on California and the San Francisco schools, which, unless we greatly err, are from the pen of Miss E. FLORENCE HORNE, lately a teacher in Chicago. That the letters were written by a member of the profession is evident.

Once arrived at San Francisco, a dull fog greets your eyes when you first open them in the morning. The tops of the houses and the pavements are wet, as if a slight rain had fallen. The cold dampness strikes its chilliness to the bones, and its darkness makes one feel dismal. When the sun comes out at nine o'clock, sometimes later, and very seldom not at all, the air is warm, genial, pleasant. A short walk in it warms one thoroughly, filling one with new life, and almost making one forget the fog. At two o'clock generally the sea breeze begins to blow, often cold and sharp, not unpleasant, however, while the sun shines. Sometimes it is so strong that you can scarcely keep your hat on or face it with any comfort; but cold or strong, it blows the dust in clouds over everything. I was very much annoyed by its filling my eyes, but more so as no one else seemed to notice it. But I soon became "acclimated" to it, as they say here about all inconveniences. It is clean dust. One can wear clothing much longer here than in Chicago. At different times in the afternoon, from three on till dark, at any time, the sea breeze is liable to bring the fog clouds that settle gradually over the city, until the evening is like the early morning was, in cold and dampness. I was in San Francisco about thirty days; in that time I saw one sunset, two starry nights, and one clear moonlight. Two days the sun was unable to pierce the fog. The last day, that night and the morning of the day I left, were the finest days I spent there, giving promise of the beautiful September weather, of which I have heard so much, for this foggy weather only lasts six weeks, and

they say the winds are always stronger and more unpleasant in August than at any other time.

For any one seeking relief from ill health caused by Chicago climate, San Francisco, with its winds, temper them as you will, is no place. To those with blood in good circulation, no lung affections, or catarrh, it would be a beautiful, desirable home; but if they are true Chicagoans in heart, they will only make a visit to this city of many beauties and wonders. A fire, simply a grate fire, morning and evening, would make the fog endurable; but the cost of fuel makes that an extravagance to the very ones who most need it, whose sedentary occupations have not called the blood into active circulation, but have obliged them to remain so long in shaded rooms. Sunny rooms are highly prized, which must be the reason the rich here build such immense residences. One of over thirty rooms is being built on Powell street, I was told, for a family of three. I really pitied the school children and their teachers, completely bundled up in shawls, and yet in so many cases looking pinched, blue and cold.

In one thing the people of San Francisco excel any people I ever saw; if on remembering that it is a summer month, they feel a sort of religious duty to wear a summer dress; no matter how cold it may be, they do have the good sense to put on a warm winter cloak, and sometimes furs. So in the streets of San Francisco you will see a perfect independence in regard to dress, each one dressing according to the relative state of her blood and of the thermometer. Chilled through, as one is by bed-time, it takes a long time to get warm. I have piled shawls on the bed, nearly all my wardrobe and have almost felt like putting my trunk on my feet to keep off the damp air. When, like the nuns in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, you have gathered a little warmth, you are aroused, not to prayer, but to swear at a flea and catch it if you can. *Fleas!* They swarm there. You are expected to have them on you as much as a dog. One gentleman I know of uses a powder to choke them, sprinkles it on his clothing and bed clothes, they trouble him so much. But you can become *accustomed* to them too.

We must not forget the evenness of the climate, the sight of beautiful flowers every day all the year round, the endless enjoyment of the scenery. With wealth what a home can be made in San Francisco; but we who are poor, must go elsewhere; still treasuring it always as a Mecca for many pilgrimages.

It was not until I wanted to visit the schools, and took out my map for reference, that I was conscious where any school house was situated, although I had passed many of them in the walks I had taken. They are built so much in the style of the large private residences, their grounds are almost universally filled with as fine trees and flowers, and it appears the children never molest them.

As I came down the steps of what they call "Hoodlum" schools, where the roughest boys are, I noticed, with admiration, the fuchsias over the foot of the steps, covering like a vine the arched passage, and loaded with blossoms.

The "Lincoln School," the largest, finest "Boys' Grammar School," in addition to the fine trees and beautiful flowers, has a life-size statue of Lincoln in the front yard, with dates and inscriptions. The boys and girls are taught separately, in separate schools, as far as "High School" and grammar are concerned; in separate rooms, in primary, except in a few cases where the accommodations would not allow it.

The rod is used in the boys' schools and in the primaries, and where it was used I could not but notice how few teachers were to be trusted with it. The majority of the teachers held it in their hands, fingered it, turned it over, mentioned it. The children watched it, and it was more prominent in their minds than teachers or lessons. In all such cases the teachers' voice was sharp, and the air of the school room unpleasant to me, even where I heard some good teaching.

The mild, kind, firm discipline exercised in the "Girls' Grammar Schools," reminded me forcibly of the same power I have seen almost universally in our own schools.

The teachers of the upper grades are as fine instructors as I ever saw; owing to two causes. None but those by

examination obtaining first grade certificates can teach in the grammar schools. There is \$5 difference, I think, in salary from one grade to another, except between two grades. So the poorer teachers remain in the Primary Department, and I saw there very poor teaching as a rule. The old style of teaching reading by spelling the words first, is universally used. When I spoke of the word method, some teachers seemed ignorant of it, and others thought it impracticable. Then I noticed that the reading throughout the Primary Department is mechanical, dead, expressionless. They use "McGuffey's Readers," much to the teachers' disgust. They will not allow the Bible read in their schools, yet these readers are half-filled with religious pieces, and the remainder constructed on the "go up" principle: "I go up; you go up. Do you go up? Up we go," etc.

In arithmetic and in moral instruction, they are at least two grades lower than the Chicago schools. I heard a third-grade class of girls, in the Denman Grammar, in a room with a fine teacher, singing indifferently well an exercise our seventh grades would easily master. In the same school, I heard a remarkably fine drawing lesson, given according to the "Walter Smith System," by a teacher who instructs in that branch alone.

I was most cordially received and kindly treated by all the teachers with whom I became acquainted. I universally found them *ladies*, in every sense of the word.

I was exceedingly amused by one teacher I saw in the lowest room of a school, where she had taught twenty years. It is to be hoped that she was more adapted to little children when she began, than she is now. She arranged the whole room full, of some sixty, around the sides of the room, for a spelling lesson. The first ten or twelve, older ones, having been in school longer, could spell rather well the words she gave, but those next guessed at them, and the little new-comers could do nothing. But she kept them all standing three-fourths of an hour. Finally, she left the bright ones and began on the middle class, appointing a monitor to watch the first set, who began to grow restless. "Mary," said she, "you must tell me every one that wiggles." This, in her measured, tragical tone, emphasized with a wave of thin hands, was ludicrous. But when proceeding around to the little ones, waiting all this time, who were too tired to stand any longer, she turned with another wave, "Mary, you may observe these," pointing to those under her own eye, "occasionally." I could scarcely, notwithstanding my pity for the children, keep from laughing. And when Mary wanted to report, she was not allowed to say a word.

The San Francisco schools are, I should judge, the hardest schools to teach in the country.

The list of applications waiting for positions generally numbers over a hundred. The influence necessary to secure one, the exactions, the examinations, which for first grade occur every four years, second grade every three years, and third grade every two years, are the causes. The greatest objection I have to the schools is the coldness of the school rooms. I asked in one school, where they seemed to feel it very much, why they did not have a fire? The teacher replied: "Oh! they would not allow it only in winter." All the rooms cannot be sunny, and a sunny room in San Francisco is one of the necessities of comfort.

The examination for State, county and city certificates is the same; occurs quarterly, on the same day all over the State. The printed questions are sent from the State Department of Instruction. The examination begins tomorrow. I was invited yesterday by the principal of the High School here to be present. It takes three days. Sometimes they work evenings also in order to finish. There are so many applicants that they can afford to make the examination rigid. Many fail, and good teachers are needed.

In the October number of the JOURNAL we announced the fine chromo "Memories of Childhood" as a premium for each renewal of a subscription, etc. We have now to recall the offer, as the edition is exhausted. We are pleased to announce another, quite as good, and a copy of a celebrated oil painting. See page 194.

### THE JOURNAL'S DESK.

THE TEACHER'S HAND-BOOK, written by Prof. W. F. PHELPS, of the First State Normal School, Winona, Minn., has, so far, received nothing but the most flattering notices by the press. This, of itself, speaks much for the merits of the work; more especially, as the author in the preface challenges, or rather invites, criticism and discussion. While the book throws but little new light upon the general subject of education, it may be regarded as an embodiment of the most advanced methods of instruction—methods which have become the common property of the profession.

The author claims that the book is not "aimed" at the city schools, and, in so far as it points out the true method of improving the schools of the rural districts, it is to be hoped that he will meet with abundant success. It is true that our educational problem centers in those schools; though it can scarcely be shown that the school problem is more complicated in the country than in the city; or that it requires more talent to successfully manage a district school of twenty-five to forty pupils, than a system of schools in a large city, or to conduct the executive department of a State government. The schools in the rural districts are far from what they should be. From irregular attendance, shortness of terms, frequent changes of teachers and from incompetent instructors, they fall far short of what they should accomplish; but a just comparison between the results of those schools, and the results of the city schools, might place the former in a more favorable light than the author of the Hand-Book would lead us to anticipate. Close organization and system in the latter, may be balanced by individual attention in the former.

No one will question the statement that as a general rule, "The child who reaches the age of ten years an illiterate, must remain so;" but when the author gives as the reason, "Since the great majority of the pupils in our public schools leave them at that age," and then adds that "statistics show" this, we may reasonably ask for the statistics. The author does not give them, nor refer the reader to his authority, and it is to be presumed that he has access to no statistics not open to the public.

That thousands of children, in the South, never enter school at all, is unquestionably true, but in the North, even in the newer States, it is not true to any considerable extent.

Taking Minnesota, the author's own State, in the frontier counties of which emigration has been so rapid, that the school house could not keep pace with the demand for it, we obtain from the last report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the following figures:

Enumeration of those from 5 to 21.....	210,000
Enrolled in the public schools.....	128,000
Per cent. of enrollment on enumeration.....	.61
Enumerated from 5 to 15.....	153,000
Per cent. of those from 5 to 15 on total enumeration.....	.72
Per cent. of enrollment on those from 5 to 15.....	.63

If we take two representative counties—two of the oldest and most populous in the State, Fillmore, composed mainly of a farming community, and Ramsey, containing the city of St. Paul, we obtain the following figures:

FILLMORE COUNTY.	
Per cent. of enrollment on enumeration.....	.80
Per cent. of enrollment on number from 5 to 15.....	.113

#### RAMSEY COUNTY.

RAMSEY COUNTY.	
Per cent. of enrollment on enumeration.....	.20
Per cent. of enrollment on number from 5 to 15.....	.30

Taking nine of the cities and larger towns of the State, each having a scholastic population of over one thousand, we find that the enrollment is 38 per cent. of the enumeration; and that the enrollment in the schools of the State, exclusive of those nine cities, is 66 per cent. of the enumeration.

From these figures, we deduce the following inferences in regard to our own State: (1) The youth from 5 to 21 are about 70 per cent. of the enumeration of those from 5 to 21. (2) The enrollment, in proportion to the enumeration, averages greater, in the rural districts, than in the cities. (3) The enrollment in the rural districts is nearly

the same as the number of those from 5 to 15, being greater in the older counties, and less in the frontier settlements, where schools are not yet fully organized.

If we turn to the last report of the U. S. Commissioner and examine the report of each State separately, we find substantially the same result, though we meet with the difficulty, that the school age and the number from 5 to 15 is given in but few of the States. In Massachusetts, the school age is from 5 to 15, and there the enrollment is 98 per cent. of the enumeration, being about the same in the cities and rural districts. In Ohio, the school age is from 5 to 21, but the number from 5 to 16 is given, which is 76 per cent. of the enumeration. While the enrollment in forty-three of the cities, is 52 per cent. of the enumeration, in the smaller towns and rural districts, the enrollment is 76 per cent. of the enumeration, the same as the youth from 5 to 16. In Illinois, where the enumeration includes those from 5 to 21, fifty cities give an average enrollment of 57 per cent. on the enumeration, and the remainder of the State, 76 per cent. In Iowa, the enrollment is 52 per cent. in the cities and 72 per cent. in the smaller towns and rural districts. In Kansas, the enrollment is 65 per cent. of the enumeration, being about the same for the cities and country. In New York, the enrollment is 68 per cent. of the enumeration. These States are not exceptional, only in one thing, and that is, that in all of them excepting Massachusetts, the enumeration includes those from 5 to 21. In Michigan and Wisconsin, the enumeration includes those from 4 to 20, while in the former, the enrollment is 77 per cent. and in the latter, 64 per cent.

All the northern States give similar results; and, after making all allowances, the returns show that as a general rule, the school age is from 5 to 15, and that the latter age, and not ten, is the age at which the children of the rural districts leave school.

CHATFIELD, MINN.

—L. Wright.

**A HANDBOOK OF PUNCTUATION:** Containing the more important rules and an exposition of the principles upon which they depend. By JOSEPH A. TURNER, M. A., Professor of English and Modern Languages, Hollins Institute, Va. Philadelphia: J. B. LIPPINCOTT & Co., 1876.

This is a little treatise of less than seventy pages, the object of which is sufficiently described in the title page. It takes common sense views of the uses and principles of punctuation. The following extract on the use of the comma, and on punctuation in general, will convey an idea of the spirit in which the subject is treated. After having given six rules for the use of the comma, the author says: "Many of the rules for punctuation in general, and for the comma in particular, are minute, and can be well remembered only by constant practice." \* \* Unless the comma is really needed, it should not be used. If too frequently used, it splits discourse up and confuses rather than helps. And the same remark will apply to all the points; as their object is commonly to aid the meaning, if they do not do this or if they do the opposite, they should not be used."

**ELEMENTARY COURSE IN GEOGRAPHY:** designed for Primary and Intermediate Grades, and as a Complete Shorter Course. By WILLIAM SWINTON. Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor & Co., New York and Chicago.

This book is not a condensation of Professor Swinton's "Complete Course," noticed in our last, though it partakes largely of the features of that admirable volume. It is designed as an elementary geography, yet to be sufficiently extensive for those pupils who do not finish a grammar school course.

The author begins with a breakfast table story, "Geography in a Cup of Coffee," intended to interest the pupil, and to give him an idea of the character of the study to which the book is to introduce him. It will certainly convey to a child's mind a better understanding of the nature of geography, and lead him to pursue the study of it, than the definition of the science which usually meets the tyro in the first line of his new book. "This lesson is designed merely to be read aloud in the

class," and is followed by primary lessons on "Things around us," local geography "for city classes" and "for country classes," simple illustrations of map-making, and illustrated definitions of divisions of land and water, necessary ideas in regard to mathematical geography, distribution of plants and animals. These primary lessons are very pleasing and well conceived. In common with the remainder of the book, the greater part of them is designed "for reading," not to be crammed and rammed *verbatim* into the memory. Matter designed to be committed to memory is printed in bold-faced type, and marked "for recitations." It is a feature very satisfactory to us that the author has constantly borne in mind that, while some things should be learned, and *well* learned, it is not necessary that everything placed between the covers of a text-book should be memorized, and that there is a limit even to the receptive capacity of a patient child. Consequently, the author has felt at liberty to discuss facts and principles in a familiar way, but has guarded against looseness of conception by the terse definitions which follow the discussions.

These primary lessons, occupying 33 pages, and followed by Part II, "Description of Countries," which fill the remainder of the 128 pages. These descriptions are in two parts, "for reading" and "for recitation," the former occupying perhaps three times as much space as the latter. The reading lesson takes up the salient points in the settlements, surface, climate, etc., of different countries, the recitation lesson and map questions only the most prominent. The feature of special geography for certain classes (Eastern, Southern, etc.) is preserved, as in the author's larger work.

The impression first made upon opening this volume, that it would prove heavy is relieved upon examining it. The maps and illustrations are profuse, and so much is designed simply for reading that we think no danger of this kind is to be apprehended. The work has a freshness about it that will, of necessity, please both teacher and pupil. It is eminently a success.

Of course, the mechanical execution is all that is desired. Edward Cook, 133 and 135 State street, will send copies for examination for 60 cents.

**SHELDON'S SERIES OF READERS.** By E. A. SHELDON, Principal of Oswego State Normal and Training School, author of "Elementary Instruction," and "Lessons on Objects." New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 743 and 745 Broadway.

Aside from the material elements of a series of Readers, such as paper, typography, illustrations, binding, etc., there are four points to which a teacher instinctively turns when examining new reading books: 1. The manner in which the art of reading is presented to the little child; in other words, the character of the first reader, or primer; 2. The grading of the series; 3. The character of the selections; 4. The instructions, analyses, principles: what may be called the *science* of reading.

1. The primer of this series is constructed for either of the three methods of teaching reading now in vogue. Its peculiarity is its *phonetic* character. "It contains but twenty-four unmodified letters of the common alphabet, and each letter invariably represents the same sound." For instance, the letter *a* always represents the "short" sound of *a* as in "mat," no other sound of *a* being represented in the book. So for other letters. This is an effort in the direction of overcoming the greatest obstacle in teaching primary reading, and ought to be successful. It is certainly based on true philosophy, that of teaching general truths first, exceptions afterward.

2. The trouble in the grading, as every teacher knows, is (usually between the 3d and 4th Readers,) at the point at which the articles written especially for the series end, and selections from general literature begin. So great is the difference between these two styles of writing, that in several otherwise admirable series of Readers, an "Intermediate" has been found necessary to bridge the chasm. The first glance leads one to think that Mr. Sheldon has fallen into the same error; but a closer scrutiny shows that he has avoided this blunder. The series is *well* graded; difficulties come gradually, more rapidly, of course, in the higher books.

3. The selections are, as a whole, admirable. The Fifth Reader is a collection of gems from English and American literature. We find our copy in the hands of the adults of the household, together with other volumes of choice extracts from good authors. Mr. Sheldon has not confined himself to a few writers, but has ranged over a wide field, and has been almost as happy in what he has omitted as in what he has appropriated. We find extracts from Agassiz, Aldrich, Bancroft, Carlyle, George Elliot, Everett, Goldsmith, Greeley, Charles Kingsley, Jules Michelet, Motley, Prescott, Pumpelly, Ruskin, Taine, Benj. F. Taylor, Tyndall, Whymper, as well as from Abbott, Alcott, Beecher, Dickens, Irving, Saxe, Beecher Stowe, and other stock authors. We are pleased to find that Cicero has been allowed to tell the story of Damocles, old to us old teachers, but new and fresh to many a young teacher as well as to pupils. The "Riderless War Horse," of W. H. Murray, is a most charming story. How the boys will thank Mr. Murray for writing and Mr. Sheldon for selecting such a delightful history! And what boy can ever treat a horse otherwise than with affection, after perusing again and again, as we have done, that touching recital? We find here Aldrich's youthful production, "Babie Bell," and we wonder that the exquisite taste which culled that gem, should have permitted the "Dumb Waiter" of Cozzens within the same covers. With this exception of this last named article, we think the Fifth Reader selections could not be improved.

6. "The science of reading will be fully discussed in the work of Elocution now being prepared." Consequently, no space is occupied in the Readers with methods of instruction. These, with sketches of prominent authors, quoted, etc., will be found in the manual.

The mechanical appearance of the books is prepossessing. The paper is good, the type large and clear, the illustrations numerous, and most of them very fine. The patented binding seems to be very strong, and promises to be enduring.

FIRST BOOK OF ZOOLOGY. By EDWARD S. MORSE, PH. D., late Professor of Comparative Anatomy and Zoology in Bowdoin College. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1875.

We have no hesitation in giving this volume our hearty and unqualified approval. As an elementary book, we do not know its peer. The author recognizes the difficulty of attempting to teach a science systematically when his pupils are totally ignorant of the material to be classified. He therefore begins by the formation of a cabinet of common objects accessible almost everywhere, and directs the study of the specimens. Fresh water shells are the first objects studied, the pupil being supposed to be able to procure mollusks, snails, etc., with little effort. Then sea shells, and such as the common clam and oyster, are investigated, and their structure and habits discussed in the most interesting manner. Common insects are then presented in such a manner that the pupil must be led to open his eyes to the insect world around him, and become, himself, an investigator, the highest aim of every such text-book.

Prof. Morse is evidently a teacher. Such books are made only by those who have actually done the work of teaching, and done it well. He has illustrated his book with outline figures, not only for the purpose of illustration, but to fix the forms by having the pupils copy them. He says:

"The necessity of pupils copying (however poorly) the figures, either upon the slate or upon paper, cannot be too strongly urged. From his own experience, the author has learned that a specimen or figure may oftentimes be carefully studied and yet only an imperfect idea be formed of it; but, when it had been once copied, the new points gained rapaid all the trouble spent in the task."

The book is beautifully gotten up in a style which does the publishers great credit.

ELEMENTS OF ZOOLOGY. A Text Book. By SANBORN TENNEY, A. M., Professor of Natural History in Williams College. Illustrated by 750 wood engravings. New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1875.

The author of this volume has achieved a reputation as

wide as the domain of the English tongue. This, his latest book, is a popular and yet a scientific presentation of the elements of zoology for more advanced classes of pupils than the work noticed above is designed. It abounds in illustrations, 753 in 497 pages. It is as admirable in its field as Prof. Morse's volume is in its. After giving the general idea of the animal kingdom, including the lower as well as the higher forms of life, with the nature and objects of various systems, tissues, etc., the author divides all animal life into five great types or branches, adding the Protozoa to the four great sub-kingdoms of Cuvier. He then gives a scientific discussion of these different branches, beginning with the skeleton of the Vertebrates, describing the animals in groups, and not entering upon the vexed question of species.

It is just the book needed by every teacher, and should find a place upon his desk.

A CLASS BOOK OF CHEMISTRY, on the basis of the New System. By EDWARD S. YOUNMANS, M. D. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1875.

The constant advance in the science of Chemistry calls for constant revision of chemical works, which are antiquated in a few years. The basis of the present volume is the author's well-known work, first published in 1852, and rewritten in 1863. While this volume is less in compass than its predecessors, it contains much new matter, especially in those departments of the science in which the greatest progress has been made. The important subject of the chemistry of light is quite well developed. Spectrum Analysis is treated with great clearness, and with sufficient fullness for the character of the work, which is designed "to meet the wants of that considerable class, both in and out of school, who would like to know something of the science, but who are without the opportunity or the desire to pursue it in a thorough experimental way."

Prof. Youmans has produced a work admirable in every respect. It is up to date; it is well written; the subjects are well chosen and well arranged. We know of no text-book in the science which we would prefer to use in the class-room.

The illustrations are fine, and the whole mechanical appearance of the volume prepossessing. The appendices are valuable, containing various tables and scales, pronunciation of chemical terms, etc.

#### SPECIAL NOTICE. FINE PREMIUM.

VOGELS' CHILDREN is an oil painting of great celebrity in the Royal Gallery in Dresden. It is owned by the Government and is greatly valued, indeed it is one of the most popular pictures in this famous collection and is often copied on orders from all parts of the world. The painting represents the two children of the great artist Vogel looking at an illustrated picture book. Their appearance every way is interesting and fascinating. The face of the older child is often seen on porcelain and is a great favorite with jewelers who set it in gold for breast pins and other valuable ornaments. Painted photographs of this celebrated picture have been sold in this country as high as \$20 gold. The oil chromo, which of course is reduced in size, is more beautiful than the original painting. It is done in twenty colors and is as perfect, perhaps, as any similar work which has ever been produced in this country. No one can see it without admiring it. It is a great favorite and is worthy of a position in any parlor or school-room. By purchasing a large number of copies we are enabled to offer a copy of it as a PREMIUM FOR EACH RE-NEWAL OF A SUBSCRIPTION and for each NEW SUBSCRIPTION AT \$1.50 PER YEAR PAID IN ADVANCE. This is a liberal offer which we hope many will at once accept.